

REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE FALLS CHURCH PLANNING COMMISSION  
19 March 2007  
Council Chamber

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Rodgers called the meeting to order at 7:47 PM.

2. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:                      Ms. Budetti  
   Ms. Fauber  
   Mr. Puentes  
   Ms. Rodgers  
   Ms. Sanders

Members Absent:                      Mr. Holran

Administrative Staff Present:      Ms. Friel, General Manager of Development Services/  
   Planning Director  
   Ms. Block Sanford, Senior Planner

3. PLANNING COMMISSION REPORTS:

Mr. Puentes reported on the City Center Master Design Team's meetings. He stated that a neighbor to the project area proposed had been appointed to the Team; that the Team met at least weekly; and that the Team's work should be completed by the end of March.

In response to questions, Mr. Puentes and Ms. Friel agreed that the Team would provide a written report of recommendations, which would be separate from a staff report, with a prioritization of the recommendations. The Team's report would be available prior to Council's First Reading on the City Center plan. The draft worksession schedule likely will be amended as the applicant has a number of technical issues to address prior to First Reading. The City Council has expressed its preferences in the process to be used for this project.

Chair Rodgers expressed her preference that Planning Commission worksessions on the City Center proposed be held prior to First Reading. Ms. Budetti concurred. She noted that this is a very large project and expressed her belief that Commissioners have had no input to the process and feel like they don't know what is happening while the review process progresses.

Ms. Budetti reported on the Economic Development Authority's (EDA) March meeting. The EDA is interested in maintaining the momentum of development in the City and plans a series of developer forums with guest speakers. She mentioned that the results of an affordable housing study were presented at the meeting. Ms. Friel reported that the Commission would receive a copy of this report and would hold a joint worksession with the City Council on this item on 2 April.

Ms. Budetti reported on Deliberation Day held 17 March. She encouraged citizens to be aware of planned development and to become involved in what Falls Church is becoming. Chair Rodgers, a panel member at Deliberation Day, advised that the event was well attended and that the many small group discussions were lively. She noted that another Deliberation Day may be held and it is anticipated that a written report of last Saturday's event would be provided to City boards and commissions. Ms. Budetti noted that many attendees were ambivalent about new development; they understood the need for the new projects, but wanted to preserve the existing small town feel, which was the basis for their purchasing homes in the City. She reported that residents of some of the new Special Exception developments attended the event.

Chair Rodgers reported on the Advisory Board of Recreation and Parks meeting of 7 March, during which the first public hearing on Big Chimney Park's Master Plan was held. A number of neighborhood concerns were presented; more public hearings on this Plan will be held.

4. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS: None.

5. PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT/WORKSESSION SCHEDULE:

Ms. Friel reported that the Commission would consider the Northgate Rezoning and Special Exception applications this evening. On 2 April, the Commission would hold a joint worksession with the City Council to discuss the affordable housing report, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and, perhaps, to receive a City Center update. The Commission would not have a regular meeting that night. On 16 April, the Commission will receive the Citizens' Advisory Committee on Transportation's (CACT) Pedestrian Plan, as well as consider Special Exception Amendments for The Byron (513 W. Broad St.) and for The Spectrum (444 W. Broad St.).

6. OLD BUSINESS: None.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

**A. ORDINANCE T07-05, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING DISTRICT MAP OF THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA, BY REZONING APPROXIMATELY 1.53 ACRES OF LAND FROM B-3, GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (.42 ACRES), AND T-1, TRANSITIONAL DISTRICT (1.11 ACRES), TO B-1, LIMITED BUSINESS DISTRICT, FOR THE PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 436, 458, AND 472 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET TO HEKEMIAN & COMPANY, INC.**

**and**

**B. RESOLUTION TR7-07, A RESOLUTION TO GRANT A SPECIAL EXCEPTION FOR MIXED-USE FOR PROPERTIES LOCATED AT 436, 458, AND 472 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET TO HEKEMIAN & COMPANY, INC.**

Chris Bell, Senior VP, Acquisition and Development, Hekemian and Company, Inc.; Allen Mushinsky, AIA, Principal, MVA Architects; and Robin Antonucci, Wells and Associates, LLC, were present.

Ms. Sanford reported that the City Council had given First Reading to the Rezoning and Special Exception applications at its 26 February 2007 meeting. The proposal is for a mixed-use development at 436, 458, and 472 North Washington Street. This applicant was denied First Reading for a project on this site by the City Council in July 2006. The applicant has since significantly improved the project and addressed Council, staff, and neighbor concerns. The current application includes a revised project design, expanded community benefits package and additional traffic analyses.

The current application proposes the following:

Residential Uses	95 apartments and 10 townhouses
Affordable Dwelling Units	7 (6.7%)
Office Uses	14,015 square feet
Retail Uses	22,735 square feet
Total Commercial Uses	23%
Rear Buffer	Up to 20 feet plus the townhouses
Height	4 stories at the northwest corner, five stories at the southwest corner, and 3 story townhouses
Net Fiscal Impact	\$203,063 in the first year \$195,753 in successive years
Total Vehicle Trips	1,807 (91 AM/162 PM)

The special exception application also includes voluntary development conditions, which are summarized below. The green roof condition, the VIP Program, and the commitment to develop a construction parking plan have been added since the 29 January 2007 worksession.

- Construction of seven (7) affordable dwelling units for a term of 15 years (all at 60% HUD median);
- Payment of \$687,372 to offset school capital costs as outlined in the City's adopted Capital Improvement Program;
- Installation of a green roof;
- Undergrounding of utilities on the property's North Washington Street frontage between East Jefferson Street and East Columbia Street. This is a significant investment valued at approximately \$650,000;
- Construction of a median break at the site entrance and re-landscaping of the median on North Washington Street;
- Construction of streetscape improvements along the North Washington Street frontage between East Jefferson Street and East Columbia Street and along East Jefferson Street;
- Payment of \$50,000 in annual installment of \$10,000 per year for up to five years towards GEORGE;
- Payment of up to \$50,000 for a post-development update to the existing traffic impact study within 12 months of project completion and any traffic improvements identified by the study and undertaken by the City due to the impact of the project;
- Utilization of LEED strategies;
- Implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) principals including live/work units, broadband and cable access, Smart Card for GEORGE (if available), reserved parking for hybrid vehicles, parking area and easy access for food delivery; ATM

located in building if possible, and provision of bike racks along the sidewalk and within the plaza area;

- Institution of a VIP Program to provide move-in discounts for City employees, including teachers;
- Construction of a parking garage in a manner to permit 800 MHz radio signals to be transmitted and received from within the garage;
- Commitment to develop a construction parking plan and construction traffic and staging plan during site plan; and
- Construction of the development substantially as proposed and as approved by the City Council in the Special Exception application including quality architectural finishes as shown.

The applicant met with the City Council and Planning Commission in a joint worksession to present the revised project on 29 January 2007. Additionally, the applicant met with the Planning Commission in a worksession on 5 March 2007.

The site is approximately 1.53 acres in size, zoned B-3 General Business District and T-1 Transitional District, and is designated for Mixed Use in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bell of Hekemian & Company, Inc. is the applicant. The property would be leased from its current owner, Wooddell Family Ltd. Partnership, for this project.

The existing subject properties include the following characteristics:

<u>Address</u>	<u>Land Area (sq ft)</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Present Use</u>
436 N. Washington St.	17,802 (27%)	T-1	Single Family Unit
458 N. Washington St.	30,495 (46%)	T-1	Parking lot
472 N. Washington St.	18,374 (27%)	B-3	Funeral Home vacant

The applicant is requesting a rezoning of 1.53 acres of property from T-1, Transitional, and B-3, General Business, to B-1, Limited Business, in order to be eligible for the Special Exception. The rezoning is a legislative process that requires two readings by the City Council, a mandatory Planning Commission recommendation, and City Council adoption of an Ordinance. City Council is the final approval required. Public hearings were advertised, adjacent property owners were notified by mail, and the property was posted with signage reflecting public hearing dates and contact information.

The applicant is requesting a Special Exception for a mixture of residential and commercial uses on property zoned B-1, Limited Business District, after the Rezoning request is approved. Special exceptions are also a legislative process. The Special Exception process requires two readings by the City Council, a mandatory Planning Commission recommendation, and recommendations by other boards and commissions. City Council is the final approval authority. Public hearings were advertised and adjacent property owners were notified by mail of the public hearing dates and contact information. The Rezoning and Special Exception applications may be processed concurrently.

The Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT) and the Housing Commission have reviewed the project. The Economic Development Authority's (EDA) comments have not been finalized, but overall the EDA is very supportive of the project. Copies of these comments were

provided in the staff report. Comments from the Architectural Advisory Board (AAB), the Environmental Services Council (ESC), and the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), were provided at the dais this evening.

Over the past few years, the applicant has held a number of meetings with the neighbors adjacent to the site to provide the community with details of the project and to solicit feedback. The most recent meeting was on 20 February 2007. The City has received letters about this project from residents in the nearby neighborhoods, which were included in the staff report.

The Rezoning would facilitate the request for approval of a Special Exception for mixed use, which is recommended by the Comprehensive Plan. The B-1, Limited Business District, is more appropriate than the existing T-1, Transitional, and B-3, General Business Districts, but must be considered in tandem with the Special Exception request for mixed-use to implement the "Mixed-Use" Comprehensive Plan designation.

Applications for Special Exceptions are evaluated using the primary and secondary criteria as stated in the Ordinance. The Ordinance states that the primary criteria are essential to the character and well being of the city, whereas the secondary criteria are discretionary in nature. The following is staff's detailed analysis of the project's consistency with the primary and secondary criteria.

#### Primary Criteria:

*"The resulting development conforms with the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan and Design Guidelines."*

#### **Comprehensive Plan:**

The application appears to meet the goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. The 2005 Plan recommends a mixed use development with a high intensity mixture of commercial and residential uses. The Plan emphasizes that this mixture of uses should be designed to take advantage of the close proximity of the property to the East Falls Church Metro Station and mixed-use development plans in Arlington County.

The Plan's definition of "Mixed-Use" includes language that notes that several City sites designated for "Mixed-Use" are also transitional in nature, as they abut low-density residential neighborhoods. The Plan states that redevelopment projects should be designed to protect and to enhance adjoining properties. The scale and mass of this proposed project, especially with the townhouse units serving as a transition, would protect the adjacent residential neighborhood.

The Plan specifically cites "pedestrian-oriented development and hospitality uses" as appropriate to take advantage of the proximity to the Metro station. These could include restaurants, entertainment venues, and hotels. The Plan also specifically cites the need for the "Protection and consideration of adjacent residential uses during redevelopment efforts, including the impacts of buildings and potential new traffic generation."

#### **Design Guidelines:**

*Guidelines for Streetscapes*

Trees, shrubs, and other plantings should be used to provide beauty and shade in the streetscape. There is not an adopted streetscape plan for North Washington Street, but the developer has offered to construct streetscape improvements including brick sidewalks, lighting, landscaping, and other features according to a design approved by City staff. Staff has developed a draft conceptual design and layout plan for the Streetscape along Washington Street and will be finalizing it within the next year.

#### *Guidelines for Site Elements*

Site elements should reflect the character of the sub-area, respond to the buildings and to surrounding residential neighborhoods, and develop a recognizable edge to the streetscape.

- **Building Placement:** The Guidelines look for buildings to be oriented towards the front of the street in order to limit their impact on neighboring areas. This building has the required 14-foot setback from the face of curb along North Washington Street and East Jefferson Street. In addition, the building's proposed placement meets the 20-foot required setback in the rear.
- **Parking:** All parking for the project would be located in an enclosed garage, thus meeting the goal of placing parking out of view.
- **Landscaping and Open Space:** The majority of the plant material is on top of a structure (the enclosed and underground parking garage) and is in essence a rooftop garden. This limits the planting of shade trees and also the performance of the vegetation planted in a container-like setting without proper specifications and construction. Additional measures such as specialized soils (structural soils) and irrigation should be incorporated into the design. This will ensure the longevity and health of the vegetation. The applicant is also installing a green roof.
- **Walls and Fences:** The Design Guidelines state that walls should be constructed of materials such as brick, stone, iron, wood, and plantings that are used elsewhere on the property.
- **Signs:** Signage has not yet been proposed, although a uniform signage plan is suggested for all commercial tenants, with leases specifying location, size, and design of all signs. The property owner should retain control of sign pre-approvals. All signs require review by the Architectural Advisory Board and a permit issued by Zoning and the Building Official. In addition, the site plan must indicate the location of all signs.

#### *Guidelines for Commercial and Office Buildings*

**Massing and Building Footprint:** The Guidelines look for the facades of large buildings to be broken up using varied materials, patterns, colors and details. Staff is looking for variation in the facade since the building is large and takes up most of one city block. The applicant has substantially changed the design from the original and subsequent submittals. The developer has proposed the use of brick, stone, and hardiplank for the building, and in various colors. Staff supports the revised building design. Information about the project's massing is provided in the secondary criteria analysis below.

*"The resulting development provides for significant net new commercial square footage and allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses."*

The project will provide 36,750 square feet of new commercial (retail and office) and 105 rental residential units (95 apartments, 10 townhouses). This project is unique since all of the residential housing will be rental housing located within walking distance of a Metro station. These

apartments, along with those in the Read Building, would be the first new rental apartments built in the City in over 30 years. The project will meet a rental housing need within the City.

*“The resulting development produces substantial positive net new commercial and residential revenue to the City.”*

The City’s Fiscal Impact Model shows that the project would provide an estimated net revenue of \$208,063 in the project’s first year, with an expected net revenue of \$195,753 in successive years. Net revenue, as defined by the City’s Fiscal Impact Model, is the projected gross revenue minus all potential municipal service costs; the result is the net fiscal impact. The residential portion of the project comprises \$70,033 of the total net revenue and the commercial portion comprises \$137,730 of the total net revenue.

The net revenue for this project is relatively low compared to other Special Exception projects that the Council has approved over the past few years since this project would provide rental apartments rather than for-sale condominiums. Apartment buildings are assessed as commercial property and condominiums are individually assessed residential units, and they are valued using different approaches. Condominiums are valued using the sales comparison approach (one condo sale versus another) and apartment buildings are valued using the income approach (the value of the income/rents minus expenses generated by the entire building). The current marketplace values condominiums at a higher rate per unit based on these valuation methods, resulting in a higher revenue stream for condominiums than for apartments.

This project also includes townhouses, which have a higher pupil generation rate than either apartments or condominiums and therefore a higher projected City cost. Despite these factors, the projected fiscal impact of this project is comparable to other recently built or approved projects in the City. See table below.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Fiscal Impact* Per Acre</b>
Northgate (Projected)	\$127,943
The Byron	\$157,106
The Spectrum	\$225,408
Pearson Square	\$142,249
The Read Building	\$84,593

- Based on projected fiscal impact of Year 2 and beyond.

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Secondary Criteria:

*“The resulting development is not disproportionate to surrounding land uses and planned land uses in size, bulk, or scale.”*

The subject proposal is for a three-to-five story building, which includes an at-grade (enclosed) and underground parking garage. The building would be four stories at the northwest corner. At approximately mid-block, where the grade of the land increases, the building steps up to five stories. At no point does the building exceed 55 feet.

This building would take up the majority of the frontage on North Washington Street between East Jefferson Street and East Columbia Street and, therefore, appears quite large. However, the

applicant proposes to vary the colors, materials, and depths of the front walls so that the building does not appear to be a solid block. Rather, it appears to have the look and feel of multiple buildings. In addition, since the building height will not exceed 55 feet, it will not tower above other buildings in the area or block the view of the church steeples.

Furthermore, by stepping the project down to residential townhouses on the rear of the site, the development transitions into the single-family residential neighborhood and provides a more appropriate buffer between the apartment building and the neighborhood. However, the applicant is requesting a waiver to the twenty foot landscaping buffer requirement adjacent to Parcels 53-102-007, 022, and 020, where the buffer width varies from seven to twenty feet.

*“The resulting development does not overburden the existing community facilities, including the school, transportation, and water and sewer systems.”*

The City’s Utilities Engineer indicates that water and sewer utilities are adequate and available to accommodate the proposed development. Water supply is available for the project with a six-inch water main along East Jefferson Street and an eight-inch water main along North Washington Street. The static pressure for the site will be 60-70 psi. The fire flow available to the site is approximately 1,260 gpm, which is less than the required minimum of 1,500 gpm for this type of building. As a result, the developer would be required to install an internal sprinkler system and to coordinate with the Arlington County Fire Marshall.

Sanitary sewer for the site can be discharged to an existing eight-inch line located in East Jefferson Street. Estimated peak flow for this drainage basin is 0.338 MGD, which is less than the limiting section capacity of 0.518 MGD. While there is available capacity, there is an existing sanitary sewer line that crosses the property that will need to be relocated. In addition, staff recommends that a thorough site investigation be carried out to confirm subsoil conditions (water table, soil bearing capacity, problem soils, etc.) before the design is finalized.

### **Traffic Impact Analysis:**

The applicant submitted a traffic impact analysis (TIA) and six updates to comprehensively analyze the traffic impacts of this project on North Washington Street and the surrounding neighborhood. The bullet points below summarize all of the traffic studies and addenda completed to date. While the development scenario has been modified slightly over the past few years, the information is still relevant since each study had a different focus (i.e., neighborhood traffic impacts, traffic flow on North Washington Street, and transit reductions).

Each traffic study, except the most recent dated 20 February, evaluated a “worst case” scenario, thus the trip generation numbers and yearly growth rates tended to be conservative. In the most recent update, which is also described below, the trip numbers are based on actual transit ridership percentages for similar developments located in close proximity to Metro stations.

*March 14, 2005* – Standard Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) per City guidelines.

- Site would generate 1,887 daily trips; 84 additional AM peak hour trips, 164 additional PM peak hour trips. Based on 5% transit reduction and 2% pass-by reduction.
- New traffic signal at E. Jefferson recommended.



*December 19, 2005* - Updated to reflect minor changes in development scenario.

- Slight changes to ADT, AM, and PM peak numbers. Overall conclusions remain the same.

*April 10, 2006* – Significantly expanded TIA to include evaluation of traffic conditions on neighborhood streets adjacent and proximate to the subject site. Compared the performance of local and arterial streets to and from the project site.

- It is faster to use neighborhood streets to get from one point in the City to another during peak travel times.
- As a worst case, 15 percent of the Northgate-generated traffic would use East Jefferson Street and South Cherry Street to access East Broad Street or East Columbia Street.
- If the new signal were just as attractive to drivers as the East Columbia signal, which the study assumes, then half of the traffic that currently uses the East Columbia signal would reroute to the new light. This equates to an additional 34 AM and 35 PM peak hour trips, as well as 350 daily trips on East Jefferson Street.
- Recommended traffic calming measures to mitigate new trips on East Jefferson Street (to be implemented post development).

*January 3, 2007 (revised January 24, 2007)* – Updated to reflect the current application (105 rental units, addition of office space). Also expanded to include major study of North Washington Street corridor with consideration to other development proposals in the vicinity. Studied impact of potential new signals at East Jefferson Street and at Gresham Place. Assumed full-access on North Washington Street (median cut).

- 1,807 daily new trips; 91 AM peak hour and 162 PM peak hour with new development proposal.
- No signals at all would be best for North Washington Street traffic progression.
- Full access (median cut) at North Washington provides more options for entrance and exit to site and reduces site traffic impact on the adjacent neighborhood.
- Projects that approximately 30 percent of left turning vehicles from site would exit via the North Washington Street entrance (using median break) rather than East Jefferson Street. Without a median cut, that traffic would exit onto East Jefferson Street.

*February 20, 2007 (revised February 22, 2007)* – Updated based on actual transit ridership data (versus standard 5% reduction) and assumes full access entrance on North Washington Street.

- Significant decrease in daily traffic from original TIA: 1,501 daily trips (versus 1,807), 73 AM peak and 134 PM peak hour trips (versus 91 AM and 162 PM).
- A traffic signal would not be warranted at either East Jefferson Street or Gresham Place unless the proposed Gateway project placed an entrance on East Jefferson Street. Left turn movements from side streets and the site entrance would be facilitated by the new signal at Westmoreland Street (in Arlington County), which will create breaks in the traffic.

**Staff and Consultant Recommendation:** Do not install a traffic signal at either East Jefferson Street or Gresham Place. Install a median break at the Northgate site entrance on North Washington Street. The applicant has proposed to construct the median break and to re-landscape the existing median as part of the community benefits package.

In addition, pursuant to one of the developer's voluntary concessions, the applicant would be responsible for completing a post-development update to this traffic impact assessment one year after the project is constructed. Staff recommends that the applicant pursue the case through the City's Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program, which can evaluate the area's immediate need for traffic calming.

*"The resulting development provides community benefits, such as affordable housing."*

The Developer is providing seven affordable dwelling units for a term of fifteen years. All of the affordable dwelling units are at 60% of HUD median. Staff supports the developer's request for a fifteen year affordability period on the seven ADUs. The provision of rental housing meets an important housing need within the City.

*"The resulting development contributes to a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented environment, both on-site and in relation to adjoining properties, with street level activity throughout the day and evening."*

The development would be located on North Washington Street within walking distance to a number of City parks, the East Falls Church Metro Station, and the proposed City Center. Also, the developer has indicated that leasing of the commercial space will focus on uses that serve a pedestrian clientele such as convenience-type uses.

*"The resulting development offers creative use of landscaping, open space and/or public parks, public plazas, and walkways connecting to adjoining properties."*

The conceptual plan shows two residential courtyards within the development. Overall, there is not much open space on this project. As a result, staff urged the applicant to utilize "green" technology on the site to offset the lack of green space. The applicant responded by including a green roof as a community benefit.

*"The resulting development provides a variety of commercial services and products that are attractive to and meet the needs of all city residents for entertainment, art, recreation, dining, retail, and an array of consumable goods."*

The proposed project would have approximately 22,735 square feet of retail and 14,015 square feet of office space. The spaces have not yet been leased, but the developer has indicated that they are seeking uses such as a restaurant, a salon, a fitness center, a fine wine store, a gourmet food store, or an ice cream shop.

*"The resulting development encourages local or independent businesses."*

The retail tenants for this project are undetermined at this time.

### **Parking Analysis**

*"The resulting development provides for a reduction of single-use parking."*

The proposed update to the City Code requires 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit within a multifamily residential use. Therefore, 158 spaces would be required for 105 residential units. The applicant proposes the standard retail-parking rate (1 space per 200 square feet) for the retail portion of the development, for a total of 114 parking spaces. The applicant proposes the standard office parking rate (1 space per 300 square feet) for a total of 47 spaces. The project therefore requires a total of 319 spaces.

The applicant has utilized the shared parking matrix and determined that the peak parking period is weekend days from 6AM-6PM. The required parking total for that time period would be 277 spaces. The applicant is providing 319 spaces, which is 42 spaces over the requirement (but meets the requirement without the shared parking reduction). The excess parking will be available for visitors, or a portion may ultimately be required if one of the tenants is a restaurant, which has a higher parking requirement than general retail. Residential parking must be dedicated and not available for sharing with commercial uses.

*“The resulting development encourages multi-modal transportation through design and other techniques, to reduce the reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and utilizes sheltered stops for mass transit whenever feasible.”*

There are existing bus stops (Metro and GEORGE) near the subject property. Bicycle racks should also be incorporated into the design of the project in locations that are attractive to residents. Pedestrian traffic is encouraged due to the development’s proximity to Broad Street and the proposed City Center, the East Falls Church Metro, and several City parks.

*“The resulting development utilizes LEED criteria in the design of the project.”*

The applicant is incorporating a number of LEED components in the project and has indicated that their project will meet the criteria for the following LEED categories: site selection, urban redevelopment, alternative transportation and TDM features, stormwater management, light pollution reduction, CFC reduction in HVAC equipment, reduction in ozone depletion, storage and collection of recyclables, minimum IAQ performance, use of low emitting materials, indoor chemical and pollutant source control, systems controls, and daylight and views. The application details how the project meets each criterion. The applicant is also installing a green roof.

In response to Ms. Sanders’s inquiries, Ms. Sanford indicated that a project population projection was not done; and that staff had participated in discussions with Arlington County staff on traffic around the East Falls Church Metro Station, but not specifically on the traffic signal to be installed at Westmoreland Road, just north of the development being discussed tonight.

In response to Mr. Puenetes’s questions, Ms. Sanford replied that about one year after the projected is completed a post-development traffic analysis would be conducted and compared to the projected traffic impact. Any recommended mitigation strategies would be reviewed through the City’s CACT’s Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program. The City Manager considers recommendations from the CACT and implements any needed action(s). Hekemian has proffered \$50,000 for the post-development traffic analysis and any mitigation efforts required.

In response to Ms. Budetti’s inquiries, Ms. Sanford clarified that there is not much public open space being provided by the developer; that the TDM principals listed in the proffers had been revised slightly; and that the revised proffers were in Exhibit 1 of the large concept plan book provided with the staff report.

Mr. Bell, Ms. Antonucci, and Mr. Mushinsky responded to multiple questions from Commissioners. The VIP program, a Hekemian idea, waives fees and deposits for local jurisdiction employees and teachers moving into residential units in their developments. The fees typically total about \$1,000. Ms. Friel stated that the City defines the term ‘city employee’. TDM tries to reduce vehicle trips through planning principals such as a locating a development

in a dense area near mass transit; encouraging a reduction of vehicle trips through easy bicycle storage, interesting and convenient pedestrian walkways, and fostering an openness to new modes of travel. Including TDMs allows residents to pre-select living near mass transit. Arlington County initiated TDMs by Ordinance over four years ago; Fairfax County is considering legislating TDMs.

Ms. Sanford noted that Exhibit 1 provided in the staff report reflected the modified proffers. These modifications clarify the TDM principals and include a statement concerning the provision of construction parking.

In response to further questions from Commissioners, Mr. Bell, Ms. Antonucci, and Mr. Mushinsky stated: that premium parking is located closest to the entrances; that delivery vehicle parking is provided for residents; that more TDMs could be added and refined over time; that the LEED criteria includes the site selected for a development, the demolition of any existing structure(s) and the disposal of post-demolition materials, the building's placement on the site, the building's design, the materials and mechanical systems chosen for the building, and the post-construction certification; that board and commission comments and a resident's comments provided to the Commission this evening were just received by the applicant team, so they were unable to respond to the comments therein at this time; that the applicants were willing to consider the recommendations made by the boards and commissions; and that it was unlikely that any native rock found would be available for reuse, as access to the site would be limited due to insurance issues.

In response to Ms. Sanders's questions, Ms. Friel concurred that the term "retail space" was a complicated issue. Other applicants for mixed-use special exceptions proffered retail, particularly national retail, to justify additional building height. She noted that this applicant clearly indicates that service retail would be offered in the development proposed. The issue of defining retail was not a problem when the Special Exception Ordinance was drafted and adopted. The site proposed for this development is not suitable for prime retail, but would support service retail for the residents.

Ms. Sanders expressed her belief that there are multiple services in the City, but few places in which to purchase things. Chair Rodgers concurred and expressed her belief that Arlington County had identified this area as a prime location for intense development. Ms. Friel suggested that the service uses being considered could be clarified so that there is no misunderstanding as retail tenants are sought. She read language drafted by staff for the two Special Exception Amendment applications.

In response to further questions from Ms. Sanders, Ms. Friel advised that the large-sized sheet was the concept plan that was part of Exhibit 1, as required by the City Code for a Special Exception application. Ms. Sanders suggested that the concept plan be attached to Exhibit 1 for clarity.

Following a PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Bell, the applicant team and staff responded to additional questions from Commissioners. Their responses included the following information: store entrances will be accessed from the street, the tenants will determine whether interior entrances are provided; that the retail spaces will be the full-depth of the building; that the

courtyard and the water feature are open spaces accessible only to the residents; that the median cut planned on North Washington Street had been reviewed carefully and found to meet transportation safety requirements for entrance criteria and sight distances; that the median break could be closed in the future should traffic volume warrant it; that the median break would have signage and stripping; that several traffic circulation options were considered before a decision was made; that existing trees in the median, which are in severe decline, would be removed and new landscaping installed; that new landscaping would be bonded; that the City would maintain the median landscaping in the long run; and that it is difficult to predict the number of residents anticipated. There will be a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, with one three-bedroom unit on the top floor. The typical resident in a development of this type is a young, urban professional.

The Chair opened the item to the public.

1. Fred Foss (119 East Jefferson Street) expressed his belief that the several new developments on North Washington Street would create a canyon. He noted that no core sampling had been done. It is likely that a substantial amount of bedrock is at the site, which will require blasting. Mr. Foss expressed concern for the potential damage to homes, exterior and interior, in surrounding areas from the blasting. He suggested that the developer be required to do core sampling now, before any approvals. Ms. Foss thought that the City had lost sight of why zoning regulations were in place when it permitted a large commercial development to have an entrance less than 100 feet from a residential area.
2. Rosemary Lawlor (210 Lawton Street) took exception to the staff report that indicated that only a part of the project would be rezoned; 72% of the project would be rezoned. She requested clarification of the statement that the project would “significantly improve” the property. Ms. Lawlor read from the City Council’s vision statement concerning new development being compatible with existing neighborhoods. She noted that the development proposed would preclude healthy trees, but would build within three feet of adjacent properties. Ms. Lawlor reminded Commissioners of the regulations governing the T-1 district.
3. Robert Lee (201 East Jefferson Street) expressed his understanding that the project proposed was supposed to be a transitional use, but advised that he did not understand how that could be correct. He stated that the four story building proposed was incompatible with single-family homes. Mr. Lee expressed concern with the potential impact from the development in the neighborhood, where his family runs and bikes frequently. He stated that he had moved to the City for a reason, and now the City is changing.
4. Priscilla Reimers (110 East Jefferson Street) stated that her property directly abuts the subject property. She read from the Comprehensive Plan concerning the North Washington Street Corridor. Ms. Reimers expressed her belief that the Plan goals had not been met by the project proposed due to its density, small setbacks, large number of parking spaces adjacent to a residential use, a commercial entrance less than the required distance from a residential use, and an increase in traffic on a small residential street. She stated that no over all traffic solution had been provided. Ms. Reimers noted that there are fourteen historic properties within one block of this site, which makes the development proposed incompatible.

5. Don Rea (118 Gresham Place and President of the Gresham Place Homeowners Association) stated that the Homeowners Association believes that an area-wide traffic study is needed, rather than a traffic analysis on a site specific basis. The area-wide study should include North Washington Street and all adjacent streets and should consider vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic.

6. Barbara Cram (212 East Jefferson Street) expressed concerns regarding the lack of play areas for children living in the new development, the lack of green space, lack of bike paths and bike lanes, and the lack of a covered bus shelter. She was concerned that vehicular traffic would move to residential streets once construction begins; there are many children in the neighborhood. Ms. Cram stated that these complex issues need to be addressed before the project is built. She supported an area-wide traffic study, with consultation with the neighbors so that everyone understands what is proposed and why certain concepts might not work.

Hearing no further response, the Chair closed the item to the public. The following written comments were received and summarized for the record:

7. Charles Moore (215 North Cherry Street) expressed concern regarding the traffic impact in the neighborhood from the development proposed. He stated that the problems anticipated are the result of the design and the location of the vehicular entrances and the design of the size and the massing of the building, which together produce higher vehicle counts than the neighborhood could handle.

8. Nick Galifianakis (115 East Jefferson Street) expressed trepidation surrounding the East Jefferson Street parking entrance of the project. He suggested exploring the possibility of closing East Jefferson Street all together.

Mr. Bell stated that the applicant team had reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and the Village Preservation and Improvement Society's 1993 study for guidance in the development's design, which includes underground parking and street level retail. He advised that this team had conducted multiple traffic studies, all of which included the new projects both in the City and in Arlington County, as well as regional scenarios. These traffic studies included North Washington Street and all side streets. The City's traffic consultant had reviewed Hekemian's traffic studies. All improvements proposed will enhance the area for lively pedestrian traffic.

In response to Mr. Puentes's inquiries, Ms. Sanford indicated that the construction methods such as blasting are handled during the site plan review process. The applicant has agreed that pre-development testing of certain area homes would be done and those homes would be monitored during construction. She stated that there were some environmental issues associated with The Pearson Square development. Staff in the City's Department of Environmental Services is preparing a lessons learned report for the City Council. Ms. Sanford advised that she was unaware of the issues associated with The Pearson Square project. The City could stipulate that its engineering and inspections divisions would monitor the site during construction. She advised that the Commission's favorable recommendation on the Rezoning and the Special Exception applications did not imply approval of blasting.

Ms. Budetti expressed her belief that the proposal had provided many of the things requested. However, she was concerned that the project did not include open space, that it was likely that unanticipated traffic problems would occur, and that the projected revenue was small compared to the impact of a large development. Ms Budetti indicated that she found this a hard balance.

Ms. Sanders commented on the developer's proffers. She noted that the City had addressed affordable housing, traffic impact analysis, and open space in the past few years. Ms. Sanders stated that she was pleased at the level of traffic analysis being presented now, as well as this developer's proffer to fund a post-development analysis of traffic impacts and mitigation efforts.

Ms. Sanders advised that for at least the past five years, the City has identified the North Washington Street for redevelopment, particularly near the East Falls Church Metro Station. She expressed her concern that no open space was proffered with this development, particularly if the anticipated residents are young urban professionals who often seek recreation teams on which to participate.

Ms. Sanders stated that the development proposed is attractive and would be on a site that had been unused for some time. The City has seen many projects proposed for the site. She recognized that the developer was limited in what could be proposed for a ground lease site.

Chair Rodgers concurred with Ms. Sanders's comments on a lack of open space in this development. She noted that many of the concerns expressed by petitioners were site plan related and that the Commission could address those concerns at site plan review. Ms. Rodgers expressed her belief that everyone knew that this site was prime for redevelopment; that the proposal had come a long way, that the development would meet many of the City's expressed desires, and that it is the right height for its location.

Mr. Puentes agreed that the traffic impact was a huge issue and that the alternative plans presented were limited. He thought that the post-development analysis was a tremendous idea. Mr. Puentes concurred that the project's design has come a long way and would be a good partnership with the City. He agreed that the concerns expressed about the low projected revenue were important, but that this project would meet other City goals such as rental housing, a lively and attractive development, close proximity to the Metro, and would enhance the corridor.

**MOTION:** Ms. Sanders moved, and Mr. Puentes seconded, that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of Ordinance T07-05, an Ordinance to Amend the Official Zoning District Map by Rezoning Approximately 1.53 Acres of Land from B-3 and T-1 to B-1.

Discussion:

Mr. Puentes suggested amending the motion to include the CACT's recommendation to amend Development Condition #4 to clarify the timing of the post-development traffic analysis and to add the phrase, "if found by the City" to that recommendation. **Ms. Sanders accepted the amendment.** Commissioners offered discussion on the timing appropriate for a post-development traffic study. Following discussion, Ms. Sanders offered an amended motion.

AMENDED MOTION:

Ms. Sanders moved, and Mr. Puentes seconded, that the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council approval of Ordinance T07-05, noting the CACT's comments on traffic calming to clarify that Development Condition #4 be clarified to read, "Hekemian will provide up to a total of \$50,000 for post development traffic study and improvements. The update is to be conducted approximately 12 months after completion of the project. The scope and timing of the study will be finalized with City staff and may include an analysis of post development traffic patterns, volumes and impacts, as well as neighborhood pass through traffic and potential traffic calming strategies if found by the City to be warranted." The Commission suggests that the timing of the post development traffic analysis should be conducted as determined by the City staff at a minimum of twelve months, but not more than two years after completion of the project.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 3-1-1 (Ms. Budetti voted "no"; Ms. Fauber abstained).

MOTION: Ms. Sanders moved, and Mr. Puentes seconded, that the Planning Commission recommend to the City Council approval of Resolution TR7-07, A Resolution to Grant a Special Exception for Mixed-Use for Properties Located at 436, 458, and 472 North Washington Street to Hekemian & Company, Inc., along with the attached Exhibit 1, Voluntary Concessions, Terms and Conditions.

Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 3-1-1 (Ms. Budetti voted "no"; Ms. Fauber abstained).

8. OTHER BUSINESS: None.

9. MINUTES FOR APPROVAL: The Minutes of 5 March 2007 were approved as amended.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Sanders moved, and Ms. Budetti seconded, to adjourn. The motion passed by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Noted and Approved:

Debra L. Gee  
Recording Secretary

Elizabeth R. Friel, AICP  
Planning Director

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